



Administrative Office of the Courts

Joseph E. Lambert
Chief Justice

100 Millcreek Park
Frankfort, Kentucky 40601-9230
p 502-573-2350 or 800-928-2350
www.kycourts.net

Melinda L. Wheeler
Director

Contact: Leigh Anne Hiatt, APR, public information officer, 502-573-2350, x 4064
cell 502-545-2839, lhiatt@kycourts.net

For Immediate Release

Judicial Nominating Commission releases names of nominees to fill vacant District Court judgeship in Pulaski and Rockcastle counties

FRANKFORT, Ky., Feb. 14, 2005 — The Judicial Nominating Commission, led by Chief Justice Joseph E. Lambert, met today at the Pulaski County Courthouse in Somerset to choose nominees to replace Judge Michael L. Henry whose election to the Court of Appeals was certified Nov. 22 by the Kentucky Board of Elections. Judge Henry's election left a vacant judgeship for the 28th Judicial District, Division I, which serves Pulaski and Rockcastle counties. Three Somerset attorneys were named as nominees to fill this vacancy: Michael Louis Duncan, Paul Francis Henderson III and Jeffrey Scott Lawless.

Michael Louis Duncan

Duncan resides in Somerset where he currently has a solo practice devoted primarily to plaintiff's personal injury law and the fields of domestic relations, bankruptcy, probate and criminal defense. He earned a law degree from the University of Louisville Brandeis School of Law and a bachelor's degree in general studies from the University of Kentucky.

Paul Francis Henderson III

Henderson graduated with a juris doctor from the University of Kentucky College of Law and a bachelor's degree in math and chemistry from Centre College in Danville, Ky. He currently has a solo practice that focuses on general civil and criminal law in the areas of bankruptcy, domestic relations, personal injury and workers' compensation. Henderson resides in Somerset.

Jeffrey Scott Lawless

Lawless, who lives and works in Somerset, has served as an assistant Pulaski County attorney for more than 10 years. He also has a varied law practice that focuses on litigation and trial work; insurance law; environmental law; corporate, limited liability company and business law; will preparation; probate and estate administration; mental health law; and real estate and condominium law. He holds both a law degree and a bachelor's degree in history and political science from the University of Kentucky.

Judicial Nominating Process

When a judicial vacancy occurs, the executive secretary of the Judicial Nominating Commission publishes a notice of vacancy in the judicial circuit or the judicial district affected. Attorneys can recommend someone or nominate themselves. The names of the applicants are not released. Once

-more-

nominations occur, the individuals interested in the position return a questionnaire to the Office of Chief Justice. Chief Justice Lambert then meets with the Judicial Nominating Commission to choose three nominees. Because the Kentucky Constitution requires that three names be submitted to the governor, in some cases the commission submits an attorney's name even though the attorney did not apply. A letter naming the three nominees is sent to Gov. Ernie Fletcher for review. When the governor appoints a replacement, his office makes the announcement.

District Court

District Court is a court of limited jurisdiction which hears civil cases involving \$4,000 or less, juvenile matters, city and county ordinances, misdemeanors, cases relating to domestic violence and abuse, guardianships for disabled people, traffic offenses, probate of wills and felony preliminary hearings. The Small Claims Division is part of District Court's jurisdiction and informally handles matters with a value of \$1,500 or less. The Administrative Office of the Courts in Frankfort supports the activities of more than 3,400 Kentucky Court of Justice employees, including the elected offices of justices, judges and circuit court clerks.

###